

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 3645

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PGOV, PINT

SUBJ: PINOCHET TO BECOME CHIEF OF STATE

1. SUMMARY: DECREE LAW ESTABLISHING A SINGLE EXECUTIVE AND NAMING GEN. AUGUSTO PINOCHET CHIEF OF STATE REPORTEDLY WAS SIGNED EVENING JUNE 20 AND TO BE PUBLISHED IN NEXT FEW DAYS. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION IS THAT DECISION WAS TAKEN TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF TOP-LEVEL DECISION-MAKING AND DOES NOT MEAN THAT PINOCHET HAS FREE HAND. END SUMMARY.

2. JUNTA PRESS SPOKESMAN FEDERICO WILLOUGHBY ANNOUNCED JUNE 20 THAT DECREE LAW ENTITLED "JURIDICAL STATUTE OF THE GOVERNING JUNTA" ABOUT TO BE ISSUED. EL MERCURIO REPORTED IT WAS SIGNED EVENING JUNE 20, AND GENERAL LEIGH SAID IN TV PRESS CONFERENCE IT WOULD BE ISSUED IN DIARIO OFICIAL IN NEXT FEW DAYS. PRINCIPAL PROVISION, ACCORDING TO WILLOUGHBY, IS DESIGNATION OF GEN. AUGUSTO PINOCHET AS HEAD OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH WITH TITLE OF "CHIEF OF STATE" (JEFE DE ESTADO). PINOCHET'S PREVIOUS OFFICIAL TITLE WAS "PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNING JUNTA."

3. ACCORDING TO WILLOUGHBY, DECREE LAW ALSO CONTAINS PROVISIONS CONCERNING ORDER OF PRECEDENCE, ORDER OF SUCCESSION, WHO WILL FILL WHICH POSITION IN ABSENCE OR DEATH OF ITS INCUMBENT, AND DIVISION OF THE JUNTA'S WORK. DECREE LAW ALSO APPARENTLY WILL PROVIDE FORMAL RECOGNITION TO ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND AGRICULTURAL

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COMMITTEES HEADED RESPECTIVELY BY JUNTA MEMBERS MERINO, LEIGH,

AND MENDOZA. ONE NEWSPAPER DESCRIBES NEW ROLES OF OTHER THREE JUNTA MEMBERS AS SIMILAR TO THAT OF VICE PRESIDENTS ALTHOUGH NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER THEY WILL BE GIVEN THAT TITLE. ALL FOUR MEMBERS WILL APPARENTLY CONTINUE AS CINC'S OF THEIR RESPECTIVE SERVICES. SOME MEDIA REPORTS STATE TEXT FORMALLY GIVES EXECUTIVE LEGISLATIVE AND CONSTITUENT POWERS TO JUNTA.

4. COMMENT. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR FROM THESE REPORTS WHETHER PINOCHET WILL HAVE TRADITIONAL TITLE OF CHILE'S CHIEF OF STATE, I.E. PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC. WHILE DETAILED ANALYSIS MUST AWAIT PUBLICATION OF DECREE LAW TEXT, OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION IS THAT THIS CHANGE IS RESPONSIVE TO GROWING DESIRE IN TOP MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT CIRCLES FOR INCREASED EFFICIENCY WHICH A ONE-MAN EXECUTIVE COULD PRESUMABLY ACHIEVE. DECISION WAS APPARENTLY THRASHED OUT DURING A SERIES OF TOP-LEVEL MEETINGS. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THUS FAR THAT OTHER THREE JUNTA MEMBERS OR THEIR SERVICES ARE UPSET AT WHAT COULD BE CONSIDERED THEIR SECOND-CLASS STATUS. HOWEVER WE BELIEVE THAT EVEN WITH NEW ORGANIZATION AND TITLE PINOCHET WILL NOT HAVE FREE HAND.
THOMPSON

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